

“Farmer Maxwell’s City Niece”



A THREE ACT DRAMA

by

IDA E. POTTER

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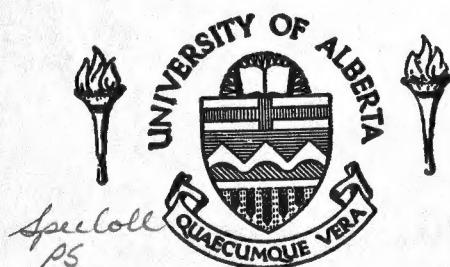
With a good moral, wholesome comedy,

Suitable for church and community

Dramatic Clubs.

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“Farmer Maxwell’s Pamphlet City Niece”



A THREE ACT DRAMA

by

IDA E. POTTER



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Foreward

The average farmer today, and the members of his home, are happy, prosperous-looking people. Present all the members of the Maxwell home and Arthur Sanderson as such—clean, tidy, and capable-looking in their working clothes. Owing to Mrs. Simpkins' greed and ignorance, she and her family present an unable and untidy appearance.

Care should be taken in the last act, in the selections for the programme (which the author has left to the players, as time can be saved by each club choosing selections which they are already familiar with) these should in every case be of a refined nature, and, in harmony with the rest of the play.

Carry out your program with enthusiasm, do not let it drag. See that your characters are well chosen and the success of this play is assured.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

In Order of Their First Appearance

Roger Maxwell	A Farmer
Marion Kitto.....	The Farmer's City Niece
Chrissie Maxwell.....	The Farmer's Daughter
Neal Sanderson.....	The Farmer's Hired Man
Wray.....	The Farmer's Adopted Son
Ann Perkins.....	The Farmer's Housekeeper
Mrs. Hiram Simpkins.....	A Neighbor
Arthur Sanderson.....	Neal's Brother
Lemuel Simpkins.....	Son of Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Simpkins
Mrs. Cynthia Kitto.....	Marion's Mother
Kencival Springate.....	A City Dude
James Sanderson.....	Neal and Arthur's Father
Hiram Simpkins	A Neighbor
Mrs. Fawcett, Roy Fields, Mrs. Roy Fields.....	
.....	Members of the Talent Club

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CHARACTERS—MALES

Roger Maxwell—A good-natured, wholesome-looking farmer, about fifty years. Can play the violin well. Appears in Acts 1 and 2 in working clothes. In Act 3 well dressed.

Neal Sanderson—Mr. Maxwell's hired man—the most outstanding male character—about twenty-five years. A well-developed young man—makes a good appearance. His training at an Agricultural College enables him to make a great change in the Maxwell Farm. A young man of high ideals, he exerts a good influence in the home and community. Is the President of the Talent Club and a good singer. Appears in Acts 1 and 2 in working clothes; in Act 3 in evening suit.

Arthur Sanderson—A young man of good habits; takes a small part in all three Acts.

Wray—Farmer Maxwell's adopted son, about ten years. Is a good comedian. Appears in three Acts. In Act 1 he imitates Marion's dress by turning a grain bag (tan shade) into a one-piece dress.

Kencival Springate—Marion's city friend, a weak character, who talks and dresses in dudish fashion. Appears only in **Act 2**.

Lemuel Simpkins—Son of Mr. and Mrs. Hiram. An awkward, uncultured young man. Has bushy hair. Appears only in **Act 2**.

Hiram Simpkins—Lemuel's father—about sixty years. Dresses and acts like an old-fashioned farmer. Takes a small part in **Act 3**.

James Sanderson—A dignified, cultured, middle-aged gentleman. Neal and Arthur's father. Appears only in **Act 3**.

Roy Fields—A member of the Talent Club, and a good singer. Takes a small part in **Act 3**.

As Lemuel Simpkins and Kencival Springate appear only in **Act 2**, they could also take the parts of Hiram Simpkins and Roy Fields in **Act 3**. Then only seven males would be required.

FEMALES

Marion Kitto—The most outstanding female character—a vain city girl, about twenty years. In **Act 1** she shows her disdain for the farm and its people. Is dressed in a tan shade one-piece dress, short sleeves. In **Act 2** appears in middy blouse and dark skirt. There is an improvement in her appearance and manners. In **Act 3** she appears in evening dress, and by her bright, happy manner and healthy appearance shows the effect on her life of the farm and its people.

Chrissie Maxwell—same age as Marion—a wholesome, sincere and energetic girl, who exerts a good influence over all. Appears in Act 1 in simple dress; Act 2, white middy blouse and dark skirt

Ann Perkins—The housekeeper, about fifty years; rather tall; has a dignified, but kindly manner. Speaks in a slow, decided way. Is a good singer. In Acts 1 and 2 dresses suitable to her position. In Act 3 appears well dressed.

Mrs. Hiram Simpkins—A hard-working, curious neighbor. Dresses in a plain, old-fashioned way. Her face is wrinkled, hair gray; shoulders stooped. Lacks education and culture. Aged fifty years. Appears in Acts 1 and 3

Mrs. Cynthia Kitto—Though fifty years of age, appears much younger. Is fond of dress and a good time. When not annoyed, as in Act 2, has a pleasing, gracious manner. Appears in Acts 2 and 3.

Mrs. Fawcett—The clever widow school teacher, and Vice-President of the Talent Club. Appears only in Act 3

Mrs. Roy Fields—A member of the Talent Club, and a good singer. Appears only in Act 3

SCENES

Act 1—The month of May. Farmer Maxwell's home. The dining-room, which also serves for a living-room. Two doors—R.D. (right door) lead into pantry, which lies between dining-room and kitchen. When the door is open (Or if curtain is used, is drawn aside), two shelves are shown, on which are dishes. L.D. (left door) leads into hall and, when open, shows hat rack. A window is also shown in room

Furniture—Dining table and chairs, two easy chairs, small buffet, secretary, one small table (on which Ann keeps her work-basket), two or three pictures and a large mirror on walls.

Act 2—Same as Act 1. Three months later.

Act 3—Five months later than first scene. Same room as Acts 1 and 2. Dining-table is removed. A piano is shown in one corner; also piano lamp, which gives a soft, shaded light; a fancy screen. Cosy corners are made; large potted plants arranged around. The room is made to look very pretty and inviting.

All players in the last Act appear well-dressed (with the exception of Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins).

Time and costumes modern.

Farmer Maxwell's City Niece

ACT I.

Scene—The month of May. The dining-room in the Maxwell home. Mr. Maxwell and Marion in easy chairs. Neal sitting near the window, reading a magazine. Chrissie clearing off the dining-table; takes dishes into pantry, spreads a colored damask cloth on, and places a vase of flowers in centre of table.

Mr. Maxwell (Drawing his chair close to Marion's). So you have come to visit us at last, Marion! Haven't seen you since you were so high (Indicating three feet). You look like your mother, especially about the eyes and forehead, but the rest of your features resemble your father's—but then, I suppose you don't remember much about him?

Marion. No, very little.

Mr. Maxwell. Of course not. You were but a child when he died. A very fine man, William Kitto was—yes, a very fine man. Well, make yourself at home, Marion. Chrissie has been looking forward to your visit for so long—not having a sister of her own. And by George, if you are not her only female cousin! Your mother and I did not bank on large families, eh, Marion? If it were not for your Uncle Henry's three sons, the name of Maxwell would die out altogether, as far as our family is concerned. (Looking closely at Marion). I say, Marion, how much do you weigh?

Marion. Just one hundred and three pounds, Uncle Roger.

Mr. Maxwell. Ah, too little, altogether too little! And you are too pale—somehow your color does not look natural-like! Now look at Chrissie there, how plump and rosy she is!

Marion. Well, you see, Uncle, we have had a very gay winter, though I must confess it has been rather hard on me. Mother and I entertain a lot, you know—why, I believe there has not been a week this last winter and spring that I have not been to a dance three times. Oh, yes, we have had great times!

Mr. Maxwell. Too much so, child—too much! It's mocking Nature right to her face! Now, look here, Marion, you just stay here with Chrissie, till you put on some flesh and color; get plenty of God's pure country air into your lungs—drink lots of milk—and, say! Do you like buttermilk?

Marion. (Disdainfully). No, I certainly do not!

Mr. Maxwell. You don't? Well, believe me, it's a fine, healthy drink; but Ann and Chrissie will feed you up; they are some cooks! Well, Neal, got your semi-monthly? Good paper that!

Neal You are right there, sir; the best of its kind on the market!

Mr. Maxwell—Anything new this week?

Neal—Yes, here is an article on "The Ever-bearing Strawberry," and another on "Bee Raising."

Mr. Maxwell. "Strawberries and Bees!" Ha! Ha! Well, I'll tell you, Neal, when we came out here forty years ago—yes, it was in 1885 (I was but a youngster then), believe me, we never thought about anything as small as strawberries and bees. No, it was grain—wheat, oats and barley, principally wheat. But, believe me, boy, it looks mighty like we've got to buckle down to more mixed farming! Somehow farmers out here are not making a living out of their grain they way they used to.

Neal. You are right, sir, they are not.

Mr. Maxwell. Looks like we've got to go in more for raisin' cattle—hogs, bees, and growing fruit; not only strawberries, but apples, pears, and other fruits. We can do it, lad—yes, we can do it!

Neal. Why, certainly we can. Others have done it in these prairie lands, why not us? Then some years when the grain crop fails, we will have something to fall back on.

Mr. Maxwell. We'll have a talk about that no-night, Neal. You need not hurry now—it is so very hot. I think it will be better to let the horses have a rest an hour longer, and we can work later this evening—what say?

Neal. I think that would be much better, sir.

Mr. Maxwell. Chrissie, hand me my straw hat, please. It will be better in the hot sun than this old felt one I've been wearing. I'm just going over to help Roy Fields fix his seeder.

Chrissie. (From kitchen). Yes, father, here is your straw hat, and don't you stay out too long in that hot sun, or Marion and I will come after you. (Enter Chrissie, hands hat, takes felt one.)

Mr. Maxwell. Oh, yes! I suppose you will be showing Marion over the farm. Bring her out to see my team. My! they are in good trim to-day, I scarce can hold them in!

Exit, L.D.

Enter Wray, R.D.

Wray. (Holding out his closed fist, in which are marbles). Birds in the nest Chris! Guess how many?

Chrissie. Ten.

Wray. No, only six—there now, Chrissie, give me back the four you took from me the other day! (Brushes past Marion to reach Chrissie, and steps on Marion's toe).

Marion (rising, speaks angrily). You horrid, rude boy!

Exit, L.D.

Chrissie. Now, Wray, how often have I told you not to pass in front of anyone. You have hurt Cousin Marion's feelings.

Wray. Sorry. Chrissie, didn't mean to.

Exit Chrissie, L.D.

Enter Ann Perkins

Ann. Wray, you had better take Miss Keeto's grips to the spare bedroom.

Wray. (Sitting down, slaps his knee). Ha! Ha! Ha! Ann, you've struck it right this time—that's just what she is—a mos-quit-o. A wicked, stinging, little mos-quit-o! Wonder what it's like to be a mos-quit-o? (Looks into pantry, picks up grain bag, brings it into dining-room.)

Wray. Say, Ann, this bag's no good. See, there is a hole right in the bottom of it!

Ann. Well, what do you want with it?

Wray. I'll tell you again, but I'll take Mos-keet-o's grips up first.

Exit Wray, R.D.

Ann. (Brings dishes of apples from pantry, sits by table, with back to right door, and peels apples). The wheat is looking fine and the oats and barley are coming along good.

Neal. Yes, Ann, they are all growing splendidly—could not be better. If the weather only favors us, Mr. Maxwell will have a fine crop this year.

Ann. I hope so, Neal. Things have improved wonderfully since you came here two years ago. Why, it doesn't look like the same place.

Neal. It is very nice of you to say so, Ann.

Ann. It is one of my principles, Neal, to give credit where credit is due. Why, it's a pleasure now to go to the hen house, cow shed and stables. You see that they are kept so nice and clean

FARMER MAXWELL'S CITY NIECE

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—and, as Mr. Maxwell told me the other day, he could find any harness, or tool, in the dark now, that you had a place for everything, and everything was always in its place.

Neal. I owe all that to my college training, Ann—you know I was not brought up on the farm.

Ann. Well, the money you spent in your training at that Agricultural College was money well spent.

Neal. Yes, I have never regretted either the money or time spent. I enjoyed my studies while there, very much; and I am also finding great pleasure in putting my theories into practice.

Ann. And others are getting a good deal of pleasure out of them, too, why, I never saw Mr. Maxwell so happy and contented-like as he has been since you have been here. He used to have some time with his hired men, before you came.

Neal. The garden is coming on well, Ann?

Ann. Yes, thanks to you.

Neal. Oh, no, you and Chrissie have done a big share of that work.

Ann. Yes, but who cultivated the land, and picked out the best seeds for us? No one but yourself, Neal.

Neal. That was but a slight part of the work. The college training helped Chrissie, too, did it not?

Ann. Well, I should say so. She never liked sewing before she went there, and now she makes all her own dresses, coats and hats, and just seems to love to do so.

Neal. And she is some cook, too?

Ann. She certainly is, and a great help she is to me—and old as I am, I don't mind being told about the new way of doing things.

Neal. That is the way with Mr. Maxwell. He does not object to my ways and theories. Now, some elderly farmers are not that way; they have their own set ways of fifty years' practice, and they simply won't try the new ways or inventions. Well, they themselves are the losers.

Ann. My idea of life is this, Neal—just to keep a-moving along with the world—learn all we can, and not be always a-harping on the old ways of doing things. Stands to reason, the young people of today can't be a-thinking the same thoughts our grandparents did.

Neal. Times have changed greatly in the last half century, Ann. Scientists and inventors have made wonderful discoveries, and, as you say, we must advance with them; but it would be well for us if we forget not, and carry along with us, many of the good principles and ideals which governed the lives of our forefathers.

Ann. That's my idea exactly, Neal. Move along with the world, observe its laws and fashions, but carry your own good principles along with you.

(Enter Wray, who has been endeavoring to imitate Marion's style of dress, by cutting a large V in centre of bottom of grain bag, and arm-holes—he has made a one-piece dress of it—has on tan hose and running-shoes. Stands before mirror and combs his hair in imitation of Marion's. Takes Ann's button bag out of work basket and uses it for vanity bag, stands before mirror, and pretends to powder his face.)

Wray. (Bowing low). Mos-quit-o Visits the Farm. (Parades around the room).

Chants:

You walk as if you were stepping on eggs,
'S if you hadn't the right use of your legs.
Oh, Mos-quit-o! Oh, Mos-quit-o!

Ann (smiling). You awful boy! What will you be up to next?

Taking dish of apples, exit, R.D.

Wray.

You powder your face, just so, so, so!
Do you think that others do not know?
Oh, Mos-quit-o! Oh, Mos-quit-o!

You rub your lips with a red, red stick,
Which sometimes, I'm sure you must lick,
Oh, Mos-quit-o! Oh, Mos-quit-o!

Your words they have a horrid ring,
And leave behind a wicked sting,
Oh, Mos-quit-o! Oh, Mos-quit-o!

(Neal smilingly watches him; then, hearing footsteps takes Wray by arm).

Neal. Here, kiddo, move on! Here are the young ladies.

Exit Wray, R.D. Neal goes back to seat.

Enter Chrissie and Marion, L.D.

Chrissie. Yes, here is the secretary, Marion, and here are paper, pen and ink.

Marion. Oh, thank you, but I have brought my own stationery, and I have my fountain pen. But how strange, Chrissie, to have your secretary in the dining-room!

Chrissie. This is our dining-room and living-room combined. Father likes the desk here. We have everything as handy as possible on the farm.

(Neal, placing his magazine on table, prepares to leave room.)

Chrissie. By-the-bye, Neal, I would like to have Daisy tonight, I want to take my cousin over to the post-office.

Neal. Sorry, Chrissie, but I am afraid you cannot have Daisy tonight. We are working her today, to make an extra team. I'll walk over after tea with the mail.

Chrissie. No, I won't let you do that after your day's work. Neal. I did not know you were working Daisy, or I would not have mentioned it. I will find some way. I must take a peep into your magazine after a while.

Neal. Yes, there are a couple of articles there that I thought would especially interest you.

Exit Neal, R.D.

Marion. Who is that man?

Chrissie. Well, I suppose you would call him our hired man.

Marion. A hired man, and he refuses to let you have a horse! When I want a horse at home I get one—no hired man refuses me!

Chrissie. Oh, Neal is so careful of the horses. He takes so much interest in them, and everything about the place. I don't think of him as **hired** help, but rather as father's **companion** help.

Marion. Humph! treat them that way, and they'll never know their place. That rude boy, who is he?

Chrissie. Wray? poor boy! his father and mother were neighbors of ours, and they both died of the flu, and there were no relatives to take Wray, so father adopted him. I think of him as my own little brother—he is a great mimic, and requires patient training, but we all love the boy.

Marion. How strange—and that sober faced woman—I suppose she is one of the family, too?

Chrissie. Oh, Ann—isn't she a dear?

Marion. Dear? (Aside) Humph!

Chrissie. Yes, Ann is certainly just like one of ourselves. You see, mother died when I was a baby, and Ann has been so good to me, and all of us.

Marion. And they all call you Chrissie. I would not allow that. Why at home, the servants all address me as **Miss Marion**.

Chrissie. It is different here, we are all just like one family—but I must be going, you want to get on with your writing.

Marion. Well, mother and Kencival will be expecting a letter from me.

Chrissie. Kencival?

Marion. Yes, he is my best gentleman friend—well, to tell you the truth, Chrissie, we are practically engaged.

Chrissie. Is that so—what is his occupation?

Marion. Occupation?

Chrissie. Yes, what is his calling? Is he in business—or has he a profession?

Marion. Oh, no, he hasn't any calling! You see, his father is a millionaire, and he has all the money he wants to spend, and. Chrissie, he gives me such a good time, and he is such an exquisite dancer! Mother thinks such a lot of Kencival, he is what you would call a handsome young man. Have you a gentleman friend, Chrissie?

Chrissie. Yes—a good sensible friend—Arthur Sanderson—Neal's brother: he is hired out to a neighbor of ours, he takes me different places, and we go horseback riding together

Marion. Chrissie, I hope you never marry him! Why, you would never think of marrying a hired man surely?

Chrissie. I am not thinking of marrying anyone at present, Marion. Now, I simply must go, you will never get your writing done! (Exit L.D.)

Marion. (Writes a while, then reads aloud). Yes, Kencival, just fancy—sitting at a table with a hired man, and woman, and uncle is a regular old farmer. Chrissie seems like a nice girl, but being brought up on a farm, naturally she is crude, and uncultured (thinks a minute, then writes again, and reads aloud as she writes) a thought has just struck me, Kencival, if I can persuade Chrissie to get a few up-to-date dresses, I will take her home with me, and

perhaps you and I could teach her, what it means to be a **real** lady—as she is my only girl cousin, naturally, I am interested in her, and would like her to make something of herself. My! I fancy how her eyes would open, when she would attend some of our fashionable dinners, and dances. Write me often Kencival, I will be so lonesome for you. (Writes a few words more, folds letter and puts in envelope, addresses—rises—walks around room, looking disdainfully at pictures, and furniture—powders her nose, when looking in mirror).

(Enter Ann—looks for, and takes spool of thread out of work basket.)

Marion. (Approaching Ann, with a haughty air.) I understand you are one of the servants here. See that my breakfast is brought up to my room in the mornings at nine o'clock.

Ann. With an amazed look). Your breakfast to be sent up to your room?

Marion. Yes, did I not say it plainly enough? Then I can rest as long as I want, as I am accustomed to. And another thing—I want to speak to you about—I want those large family pictures taken down from the wall.

Ann. Do—do you mean your own grandparents' pictures?

Marion. Yes, I don't like large family photos strung on the wall, especially in a bed room.

Ann. Well!

Marion. And see that the bed is turned to face the north. I don't like it facing the east. That is all now. You may go, I want to finish my writing. (Exit Ann R.D.)

Marion (returns to desk and writes, reading as she writes).

Dear Mother:

Well, here I am, after twelve hours of a tiresome journey. I do not wonder that you never liked the farm. I am not sure whether I can stand it for a month—will let you know in a week or so. It is so hot today. I will not write anymore now. (Writes a few more words, folds and addresses envelope—rises, puts letters on desk—goes to mirror—powders her face).

(Enter Wray L. D. Still dressed to imitate Marion—comes in hurriedly to look for something in Ann's work basket—is surprised to see Marion there—backs to L.D. again, keeping his eyes on Marion—who, not recognizing Wray, stares wonderingly at him).

(Exit Wray).

Marion. (Looking again at the letters on desk, then into mirror—powders her nose, and leaves room L.D.)

Enter Mr. Maxwell R.D. (Sits in easy chair, fans himself with his straw hat).

Mr. Max. Well, this is a scorcher of a day! (Looking toward kitchen door) Ann! Ann!

Ann. Yes, Mr. Maxwell.

Mr. Max. I say, Ann, have you got any lemonade there?

Ann. ..Yes, sir. (Brings in jug and glass, pours out drink, and hands it to Mr. Maxwell, Ann has rearranged her hair, and dressed for the afternoon).

Mr. Max. (After drinking). My Ann, but you sure do know how to make good lemonade!

Ann. Well, I'm just thinking, Mr. Maxwell, that I may not be making many more drinks for you. You know there are some things my conscience won't allow me to do.

Mr. Max. What's troubling your conscience now, Ann?

Ann. Your niece, Miss Keeto.

Mr. Max. Kitto, Ann, Kitto, not Keeto!

Ann. Kitto is it? I thought it was Keeto. Well, Miss Keet—Kitto I mean, came to me a few minutes ago, and says to me, as pert as you please, "I would like my breakfast brought up to my room in the morning at nine o'clock, then I can lie as long as I want, as I am accustomed to."

Mr. Max. She did, did she? I guess she is some spoiled girl alright!

Ann. Spoiled or no spoiled. I could not take her breakfast to her room, I have principles that cannot be sat on!

Mr. Max. Come now, Ann, don't let it worry you!

Ann. You know, Mr. Maxwell, that when you had pneumonia I took your breakfast to bed every morning, and all your other meals, and the same when Chrissie had the fever. But it certainly is against my principles to take a girl, who is sound of limb, body and mind, her breakfast to bed. No, Mr. Maxwell, I would leave your home first

Mr. Max. Tut, tut, Ann, don't talk so! You leave this place? Why, you know we could not possibly get along without you! I suppose we will have to humor the girl for a few days. Chrissie could take her breakfast up to her.

Ann. Well, Chrissie can please herself about that, but she

certainly has enough to do from six o'clock in the morning till nine—she needs a rest then, herself.

Mr. Max. Well, well, now don't you worry, Ann! We'll fix it up somehow.

Exit Ann R.D.

Mr. Max. I'll just finish this drink and be off (drinks). Well! Wants her breakfast to bed, eh? Ha! Ha! Ha!

Exit R.D.

Enter Ann L.D. (Takes jug and glass into pantry, returns—takes work basket off little table, from which she takes knitting. Arranges chairs, then sits down, and starts knitting).

(Enter Wray R.D. in ordinary clothes).

Wray. Here, Ann—some pansies Dad sent in to you—says they're the first of the season. (Gives flowers).

Ann. Thank you, Wray. (Takes and admires pansies).

Wray. Dad is kind, and thoughtful like, isn't he, Ann? Just like Chrissie.

Ann. Yes, he is.

Wray. But I don't like that "Mos-keet-o," wish she hadn't come here, she'll just spoil all our nice times!

Ann. You must try and like her, Wray, she is Chrissie's cousin, you know.

Wray. I don't care if she is, her whole body isn't worth Chrissie's little toe!

Ann. Wray you must not say such things! (Looking at clock) Why, its time you were away to school. (Going into pantry—reappears). Here are some cookies for you.

Wray. (Taking cookies). Thanks, Ann. Gee, sugar cookies! Say, Ann, next to Chrissie, I love you best!

Ann. Run along now, you little blarney!

(Exit Wray.)

Ann. (Looking out of window.) Strange—how I do love that boy, and he is such a mischief and tease! (Picks up pansies, looks at them). Pansies for heart ease! (Soliloquizes.) Whatever will Mr. Maxwell think of me! I should not have mentioned it to him. It wasn't really so much her wanting her breakfest to bed that annoyed me, as what she said about her own grandparents'

pictures on the wall—wanted them taken down, as she didn't like large family photos strung on the wall, especially in her bed room. I would not want Mr. Maxwell to know that. (Walks to centre of stage admiring pansies). Yes, strange—that maxim should come to me now—have not thought of it for some time—"Be noble—and the nobleness that lies in others sleeping, will rise in majesty to your own." I wonder if there is any nobleness lurking in the depths of the heart of that vain, selfish, spoiled girl.

(A knock—R. door opens—enter Mrs. Hiram Simpkins).

Ann. Oh, Mrs. Simpkins, just be seated. (Offers chair.) An' how are you today?

Mrs. Simpkins. (Wearing a faded sun hat and gingham dress—takes off hat revealing gray hair—drawn back tightly from face, and twisted into a roll at the back of her head). 'Bout the same as usul' Did you see that black cow of ours?

Ann. Which one do you mean, Mrs. Simpkins, you have two black cows, have you not?

Mrs. S. Yes, but one of them has since enough to past'er where she's put, but the other one with the broken horn, strikes off ev'ry chance she gets. I saw her making up this way after dinner.

Ann. No—I have not noticed her, I have been kept pretty busy since dinner time.

Mrs. S. I hear you've got cump'ny; Hiram seen Mr. Maxwell drivin' her from the stati'n this mornin'. Just a young gal 'bout Chrissie's age, I s'pose?

Ann. I think she would be.

Mrs. S. A relatin per'aps?

Ann. Yes.

Mrs. S. Where is she from?

Ann. The city.

Mrs. S. Well, I reckon there's mor'n one city in the world, which one is she from?

Ann. Charlestown.

Mrs. S. Humph! Well, believe me, those city gals ain't no good, 'nd I hope she don't be tryin' to make eyes at my Lem! She won't be the first city gal that's tried to git him, thinkin' you know, that they'll get our three hundred 'nd twenty acres 'long with him. No—I say agin, Miss Perkins, them city gals ain't no good!

Ann. Oh, I would not judge them all that way.

Mrs. S. Ya wouldn't, eh? Wall, now look at Roy Field's wife. she is a city gal, and would ya believe it, she only hes fifty chickens th's spring, and I hev a hundred 'nd fifty, 'nd t'other day, when Hiram went to return a rake he'd bor'rd from them, what d'ya think? If Roy 'nd his wife hadn't thet gramy-phone goin', 'nd him 'nd her singin' away to it. Hiram was jest so mad, he left the rake at the door 'nd come way.

Ann. Yes, they are both very fond of music.

Mrs. S. Fond of music ere they? 'nd 'this seedin' time! How eny one cen think of dancin' 'nd singin' in seedin' time, do beats me! 'nd Missus Bowes, her neighbor, hes herd her aplayin' the pi-anner in the afternoons.

Ann. Yes, she is thinking of teaching music this coming winter.

Mrs. S. When she ought 'er be patchin' quilts, and knittin' sox fer her man, 'nd there's thet widder the school teacher, she was a city gal, 'nd they say she hes one of those ere type writin' ma-chines' 'nd spends her time after school in writin' po'try 'nd stuff like thet. Now what's to hinder her from keepin' a few hens 'nd a cow to give her eggs 'nd milk, 'stead of spendin' out ready cash, why she oughta be savin' fer her old age!

Ann. She is a wonderful help in the neighborhood.

Mrs. S. Help! A great sample she's settin' to the growin' childern—a wastin' of ther spare moments. Ya don't catch me a thumpin' away on one of those ere writin' ma-chines, when I want to excise my fingers, I do it on the washboard!

Ann. How is your daughter Maria Ann, and her family?

Mrs. S. The're all well, but that'ere widder teacher, has been puttin' some o' them queer notins into Maria Ann's hed, 'nd wantin' her 'nd Dick 'nd the gals to join thet 'ere Talent Club!

Ann. Oh, it would be so nice if they would.

Mrs. S. Wall, I don't think so, now Maria Ann, ef I do say it, was as hard workin' a gal as anybody could find at home, 'nd she 'nd her man hev worked hard to pay fer ther farm, 'nd she up 'nd told me t'other day thet now thet ther farm was paid fer, she was goin' to buy a pi-anner for the gals.

Ann. How nice for them!

Mrs. S. Thet's wat Maria Ann sez, she spoke quite sharp to me 'nd sez, sez she, I'm goin' ta see thet my childern cultervate

ther telents, they're not goin' to spend ther time al'ys slavin' over work, the way I hed ta do.

Ann. That is Mrs. Fawcett's idea, you know, to cultivate your talents.

Mrs. S. Thet's jest what Maria Ann sed, 'nd I looked her right in the eye, 'nd sez I ta her, sez I, Maria Ann, ya learn them to cultervate the ground, fer that's where yer paw and me got our livin' from.

Ann. Yes, its right for them to cultivate the ground, but they should cutivate their talents also.

Mrs. S. Can't see it, they hev ta take some time ta rest thei bodies. Wall, I must be goin', I've got ta find that cow, 'nd it'll soon be milkin' time. By the way, is that gal Chrissie's cousin?

Ann. Yes

Mrs. S. Is she Roger Maxwell's sister's gal?

Ann. I believe she is.

Mrs. S. They say as how she marr'ed a rich man, is that so?

Ann. I don't know.

Mrs. S. Wall, Ann Perkins, ef Roger Maxwell hed gaged ya fer his privet secretair, 'stead of a housekeeper, he couldn't hev got a better one—ya air so close mouthed! (Opens door R. exit.)

Ann. (Calling after Mrs. S.). I hope you find the cow alright, Mrs. Simpkins, come again. (Puts knitting back in basket.)

(Exit R.D.)

Enter Marion L.D., goes over to desk, writes on card.

Enter Chrissie L.D.

Chrissie. Marion, have you got your mail here?

Marion. Yes, I am just going to address this card

Chrissie. There is Arthur passing on his way to town. I will call him. (Exit L.D.)

(Marion addresses card. Enter Chrissie R.D. followed by Arthur Sanderson, dressed in working clothes).

Chrissie. Arthur, meet my cousin, Miss Kitto. Marion—Mr Sanderson.

Arthur. (Shaking hands heartily). Pleased to meet you, Miss Kitto, I hope you will enjoy your visit to this part of the country

Marion. (Haughtily). Thank you.

Chrissie. Too bad to detain you, Arthur, but the men are using my driver today and my cousin would like to have her mail posted.

Arthur. No trouble at all, Chrissie, delighted to be of help. Had to go to town for some repairs, but will manage to get there before the stores close.

Chrissie. I will close the gate after you.

Arthur. Good afternoon, Miss Kitto, hope to meet you again soon.

(Exit Chrissie and Arthur R.D.)

Marion. How presumptuous these hired farmers are—pleased to meet me—Humph!

(Enter Chrissie R.D.)

Chrissie. How fortunate Arthur came along then. He is so obliging—(Looking out of window). Oh! There is Mrs. Simpkins detaining Arthur, I do hope he gets to town before six.

Marion. Mrs. Simpkins—is she the woman your housekeeper was gossiping with?

Chrissie. You are mistaken, Marion, Ann never gossips, at least, not unkindly.

Marion. When I was waiting for you in the parlor, I could not help hearing that Simpkins woman saying dreadful things about city girls!

Chrissie. I would not be surprised at that. Mrs. Simpkins is not what you would call an idle gossip, but she has queer ideas about some things, due to her lack of education, and culture.

Marion. One could easily see that.

Chrissie. She is a woman who believes that the most legitimate way of earning a living, is through hard, muscular labor. She also has a curious nature.

Marion. Still I cannot, myself, see, what any person can find in a quiet country place like this, to interest one—I imagine one would be inclined to indulge in gossip, in order to relieve the monotony.

Chrissie. Wait till you meet some of our people, Marion, and you will change that idea—no, we are too busy a people to resort to idle gossip for our amusement. Our Lilac bushes are blossoming beautifully this year, Marion, come and see them.

(Linking her arm in Marion's they walk away).

(Curtain.)

ACT II.

Scene. The dining room—three months later than last scene—Saturday after the noon dinner—Mr. Maxwell sitting in easy chair reading magazine—Neal at desk writing—Ann spreading the colored damask cloth on table.

(Enter Marion singing, sun hat on, is carrying some flowers).

Marion. (Taking off hat). See Ann! (Holding flowers for Ann to inspect) here are some of those wild flowers we were talking about.

Ann. Yes those are the ones—I think they are so pretty, where did you get them?

Marion. Down by the East bluff, just near the trail that leads to the river. My, that is a beautiful spot there!

Ann. (Preparing to leave the room) Yes, it is a lovely spot, many a time Chrissie and I have gathered flowers there.

(Exit Ann R.D.)

Marion. (Laying flowers on table—goes into pantry and brings out jug and two glasses). Uncle Roger, see what I have got for you (Pours out glassful, and hands to Mr. Maxwell).

Mr. Max. (Drinking) What! Buttermilk, Marion?

Marion. Yes, Uncle, Ann churned this morning, and I saved this jug full just for you and me!

Mr. Max. Ha! Ha! And so you like buttermilk now, eh!

Marion. Yes, Uncle Roger, I just love it! Have a glass, Neal? (Neal takes preferred glass).

Mr. Max. By George, but you are looking well! (To Neal) Did you ever see such a change in any one? Why, you are as rosy and plump now as Chrissie, the country is the place for you! You like it now, do you not, Marion?

Marion. Yes, I certainly do.

Mr. Max. You just stay with us Marion till after threshing, and then you young people can have some good times, when the busy season is over.

Marion. Oh, I would just love to see a threshing, I never saw one in my life! If only I could stay?

Mr. Max. What is there to hinder you, you don't want to go back to the city in the hot weather! Promise me now Marion, that you will stay.

Marion. Yes, Uncle, I promise you I will, it is very kind of you to want me.

Mr. Max. Want you, child—why you are such a help! and we would all be real lonesome now, if you would leave us, would we not Neal?

Neal. We certainly would!

Mr. Max. By George, I promised Wray to fix his wheel for him! Exit R. D.

Marion. (Taking jug and glasses into pantry returns, arranges flowers in a bowl, sings a piece, relative to farm life, Neal joins in Chorus).

Neal. (Bringing magazine to Marion). I have marked some items here Marion, about horticulture, that I thought might interest you. And you were speaking about roses, there are some varieties mentioned here, which thrive best in this climate.

Marion. Thank you Neal, that will be a little study for me this afternoon.

Neal. How did your practice come off yesterday, Marion?

Marion. Just fine—the children are so bright, and interesting, and that reminds me—I must phone Mrs. Fawcett about a selection I was to find for one of her pupils.

(Exit Marion L. D.)

Enter Ann R. D. some work in hand, sits at table.

Neal continues writing at desk.

Enter Wray L. D.

Wray. (Excitedly) Ann, something's blown into the parlor!

Ann. What's blown into the parlor now?

Wray. I don't know zactly, but if you wait a minute, I'll show you. (Going over to mirror, with his pocket comb, he combs his hair back pompadour style, takes a piece of black crayon, out of his pocket, makes a Charlie Chaplin moustache—takes a light gray coat of Neals, off peg in hall, and puts it on, takes a piece of white paper off desk—sits in arm chair, and places his feet on another chair, rolls paper into cigarette form, and pretends to smoke).

Ann. (Gazing at him) You don't mean to say there is a man in the parlor!

Wray. It may be, and it may be not, but this is just what it looks like.

Ann. You awful boy!

Exit Ann L. D.

Wray. (Looking at Neal) I verily, verily, believe, it is some one to see Marion.

Neal. (Hearing footsteps) Takes Wray by back of collar and helps him out.

(Exit Wray and Neal R.D.)

Enter Marion and her mother L. D.

Marion. Here, mother, come over to this window, it is cooler here. Let me take your hat off. (Lays hat on table).

Mrs. Kitto. That is a little better My! It was warm in that little parlor.

Marion. Do you not think I look better, mother. No more rouge or lip stick for me!

Mrs. Kitto. Well—you do look some better, but Marion, whatever has come over you. You look so crude, and country like, why do you wear a dress like that?

Marion. Because it is so comfortable for the farm, Chrissie gave it to me. We have great times together mother, and Neal has shown me so much about gardening, and Neal, Chrissie and I go horseback riding every morning before breakfast, and Neal—

Mrs. Kitto. Neai— Neal— Neal— who is Neal pray?

Marion. Well— well— he is uncle Roger's hired man— but he isn't an ordinary hired man mother!

Mrs. Kitto. If he is not an ordinary hired man, what kind of a hired man is he?

Marion. I guess— he— is— extra— ordinary.

Mrs. Kitto. Marion Kitto, you go and pack your grips, and come right home with Kencival and me!

Marion. Oh, mother, I cannot! I promised uncle Roger to-day at noon, I would stay till after threshing, and mother— next fall, I want to take a course at the Agricultural College.

Mrs. Kitto. Marion you astonish me! You have had all the College education you are going to get. Kencival expects you to

marry him next fall. Do you realize what you are doing, trifling with a man like Kencival Springate?

Marion. Mother, I will not marry any man next fall, nor for two years. I must know something first; I want to learn about housekeeping, and about plant life—fowl—cattle, and horses, and—

Mrs. Kitto. Marion Kitto, what has come over you, I educated you to be a lady, you are the last one on earth, I ever thought would take to a farm! (Sobs) get me my smelling salts—tell Kencival to give you my bag.

Marion (Going to L. D.) Oh Kencival, bring me mother's hand bag, please! (Returns to mother, who is affecting a faint).

Enter Kencival (Hands Marion bag, who takes out bottle of salts, and holds to mother's nose, and rubs her forehead)

Kencival. (Who is dressed and talks in dudish fashion) Why my dear, what is the matter?

Marion. Nothing serious Kencival, overcome with the heat, I guess.

Mrs. Kitto. (Rising) Heat nothing! (Puts on her hat) Kencival, you talk to this girl! I will go and see your uncle Roger, and Chrissie, before I go.

Marion. But mother, you will not think of leaving to-day! Stay and have a visit with us.

Mrs. Kitto. No, I will not— you pack your grips, and come home with us, we will leave shortly— Kencival's mother and sister are waiting for us, in the city.

Exit Mrs. Kitto L. D.

Kencival. (Sitting down in an easy chair, lights a cigarette) I must say Marion you do look changed!

Marion. (Taking a seat) Yes, I suppose I do, don't you like my looks Kencival?

Kencival. A little crude my dear, a little crude! But then of course, its this farm life, and associations— however do you endure it? I never expected you to stay a month, and you have been here three months! You surely want to come home with us?

Marion. I surely do not, I am enjoying myself immensely!

Kencival. (Drawing his chair close to Marion's) Marion, do you realize all the good times you are missing? Why, I have no less than six invitations for the next two weeks for you and myself!

three boat parties— dancing on deck, late suppers, and return in the early morning. Three banquets, all followed by a midnight dance, you surely will come, have a jolly good time, and be your old self again?

Marion. Who has been studying Kencival during his speech, (rises). No, Kencival, I will never be what you call, my old self again. I cannot explain everything to you now, I will write you a long letter. Let us go and find mother. (Walks to L. D. followed by Kencival).

(Exuent)

Enter Wray R. D.— Whistling— looks for book on desk— a knock.

Wray. (Opening door) Why, how-do-you-do Lem-u-el! Walk right in, take a seat— hang your hat on the floor, and make your miserable life happy!

Enter Lem. Simpkins, smock and overalls on, takes seat, and throws his hat on the floor.

Lem. (Has stoppage in his speech) Is— Miss— Kit— Kit—

Wray. I think she is, I'll just see. Exit Wray L. D.

Lem. (Going over to mirror, brushes his bushy hair, with his hands, pulls down his smock, and buttons it at collar).

(Enter Wray, carrying a kitten).

Wray. Here Lem— here she is!

Lem. What— you— mean— Wray— Max—well— I don't— want— no— kitten!

Wray. Didn't you ask me— "if Miss Kitty was in!"

Lem. I-did-n't— mean— no—kit—ty! I meant— Chriss—ie's cous—in.

Wray. Oh, I see, you meant Miss Kitto! I'll see if I can find her. Exit Wray.

(Lem. looks again into mirror and pulls down smock)
enter Marion and Wray (With kitten).

Wray. Miss Kitto, allow me to introduce to you Mr. Lem-u-el Simpkins, who has called on purpose to see you.

Marion. How-do-you-do Mr. Simpkins, its very kind of you indeed, to come and see me, do have a chair.

Wray. Come, kitten, this is no place for you and me.

Exit Wray

Lem. I did—n't— come— on— purpose— to see you. I —come in— out— of the— rain. You— should— not— be—lieve— all Wray Max—well— says.

Marion. No, Wray is fond of joking, but I am real glad to see you anyway, Lemuel.

Lem. I've— been— want—ing— to— see— you— though— this— long— while— want—ed— to— take— you— for— a— drive.

Marion. Oh, that's very good of you.

Lem. I've— on—ly— got— a— horse— and— buggy. Maw says— if— I— work— real— hard— this— sum—mer— and— if— we— have— a good— crop— per—haps— she'll— get— me— a—car.

Marion. Why that will be fine!

Lem. Course— I— don't— build— too— much— on— it— 'cause Maw— has— said— the— same— thing— for— the— last— ten— years. I'm— 'bout— gettin'— tired— of— workin'— hard— all— sum—mer, and— noth—in'— fer— it.

Enter Chrissie.

Chrissie. (Heartily) Why, how are you Lem. You are quite a stranger, we haven't seen much of you this summer!

Lem. Don't— get— no— time— to— come— over— Chrissie— its— just— work— work— all— the— time.

Chrissie. I understand Lem., but to-morrow will be Sunday, and, after evening church, we are going to have the young people come over here for a sing song, don't you think you can come Lem?

Lem. I'll— try— and— get— my— chores— done— early— and if— maw'll— let— me— I—will.

A knock— enter Arthur Sanderson.

Arthur. (In working clothes) How-do-you-do girls! Hello Lem!

Marion. I see you have been to town Arthur?

Arthur. Yes, had to go for repairs, and when I saw the rain coming on, thought you people might not get to town, this evening, so brought your mail out.

Chrissie. How good of you!

Arthur. (Sorting mail) Looks as if most of it is for you Marion! (Hands her two letters— magazine and a book) Oh, here is one for Miss Chrissie Maxwell, one for Miss Ann Perkins, and our monthly letter and paper for Neal and I, from father—that's all!

Marion. Thank you Arthur, I am so glad you brought the mail now— here is a music book I sent for, Chrissie and I will run over some of these pieces tonight, and have them ready for to-morrow evening.

Arthur. That's good! Keeps the interest up you know, in learning a new song. I expect there will be quite a number of the young people come over to-morrow night Chrissie.

Chrissie. I do hope so!

Lem. Did— you— get— caught— in— the— rain— Ar—thur?

Arthur. Yes, was in most of that shower. How is it you are out to-day Lem?

Lem. Maw— sent— me— to — look— fer— that—old— black cow— of— ours— the one— with— the —broken— horn.

Arthur. Oh, I saw her down the road, as I came in! You ride home with me, and we'll make her trot in front of us! We don't have much time to loiter in harvest time, do we Lem? (opens R.D.)

Lem. No— nor— any— other— time— (tips his hat awkwardly to Marion) good-by— Miss— Kit—to. Good-by— Chrissie. Exit

Chrissie. Good-by Lem. Don't forget to-morrow night.

Arthur. (Tips his hat, smiles and bows to girls) Exit.

Chrissie. (Closes door) (Marion sits by table, her head bowed in deep thought.)

Chrissie. (Taking seat opposite M-) Marion, I am so glad you decided to stay.

Marion. I feel that I have done right in staying, though I am sorry for mother and Kencival. I did not explain my real desire to continue my visit, they would not understand. (Rising walks the floor, then faces Chrissie).

Chrissie, my ideas of life have been gradually changing since I came here, as I have watched Uncle Roger and Neal, at some hard, strenuous work—as I have seen their veins swell, and the perspiration stand out on their bodies, through their muscular efforts, I have felt, that whatever fruit the earth yields them for their work—they deserve it—they have earned it. What matters it, though their clothes bear marks of grease or soil, though their hands are large and hardened with their work? They are but tokens of their honest labor! Yes, Chrissie, into my heart is born a great, and lasting respect for the man who labors. But a healthy, strong man, who does not labor with his hands, or brains, to earn an honest living— Chrissie— what would you call him?

Chrissie. I scarcely know Marion, what I would call him— but one thing I know— I could not respect him.

Marion. Nor I. Chrissie, (Taking hold of Chrissie's hands and speaking earnestly) I do not want to go back to the old life, lest I might slip again into the old paths.

Chrissie. No Marion— never backward— You know our motto "Onward and upward."

Marion. Chrissie, will you let me stay here till I feel I have the moral strength to go?

Chrissie. I will keep you here dear, until you, yourself, feel that you must go.

Enter Wray, whistling, carrying three tennis rackets.

Wray. Have a game before tea, girls?

Chrissie. Just what we need, Marion!

Marion. Yes, we haven't had any exercise this afternoon Glad you thought of it Wray!

Wray. (Stepping aside to let the girls pass out first, sings a lively tune. Marion and Chrissie join in).

Exit

Curtain.

ACT III.

Scene, The living room re-arranged— (See Scenes— Act 3, page 5.)

Marion. (At piano is playing and singing softly— enter Neal unobserved, stands admiring her, then joins in singing last verse).

Marion. (Rising) What a lovely evening we have for our little gathering Neal!

Neal. Yes, and how lovely and happy you look to-night, are you quite happy, Marion?

Marion. Yes, Neal, I am.

Neal. Father is quite taken with you, Marion.

Marion. And I like your father—he impresses me as being a very fine man. Since I have known you Neal. I have thought you must have had good parents— you have such high ideals!

Neal. My father is an honorable man, and a great financier, which fact now enables him in his declining years, to retire from an active life. He was always a kind father, and generous provider for his family, his high ideals, and my mother's noble, unselfish life, and her teachings, were ever an incentive to me, to reach after the better, and higher things of life.

Marion. You must have felt her loss very much, was it long ago?

Neal. Ten years ago, just before Arthur and I came West, father has led rather a lonesome life since then.

Marion. Does your father like this Western country?

Enter Wray (Goes to small table, and plays game thereon.

Krokinole or similar game).

Neal. Yes, he seems quite taken with it— thinks Arthur and I made a good deal in the farms we bought, in fact, is considering purchasing the Duncan estate, next to my farm, which is now for sale.

Marion. That will be great! Your father is coming over to-night?

Neal. Yes, I expect him—(Bell rings) Ah! That may be him now. I will go and see. (leaves)

Wray. Have a game Marion?

Marion. Why yes, Wray, I will be pleased to. (Both interested in play.)

Wray. Say, Marion! Do you like the way Chrissie fixed Ann's hair?

Marion. Yes, I think it very becoming.

Wray. Chrissie is always thinking of others, doing things that no one else would think of, isn't she?

Marion. Yes, Chrissie is wonderful! I have learnt a great deal from her.

Wray. You surely are different Marion from when you first came here, I don't call you "Mos-keet-o" any more!

Marion. "Mos-keet-o" why—what do you mean, Wray?

Wray. Well, when you first came here, Ann called you Miss-Keet-o, thought that was your name, and I knew you didn't like me, so I called you Mos-Keet'o, but I don't call you that now, Marion.

Marion. What do you call me now, Wray?

Wray. (Walks over to centre of room, turns and faces Marion) I call you many different names now Marion, sometimes I say Marion is a good sport! Sometimes a brick, sometimes a peach—Oh, any nice name I can think of!

Marion. Do you Wray? How good of you!

Wray. I know what you called me once!

Marion. What was that?

Wray. You called me a horrid, rude boy!

Marion. Did I Wray? It was I who was horrid then, was it not? (Walking over to Wray and taking both his hands in hers) Wray, do you know what I call you now?

Wray. Havn't any idea, tell me!

Marion. I call you a good scout, and my own dear cousin!

Wray. Do you really Marion, say, that's just great! (Swings Marion's hands.)

Enter Chrissie

Chrissie. Well, and what game are you two playing?

Marion. Just a little game of love, Chrissie.

Chrissie. Oh, how nice! So sorry to interrupt, but Arthur is

fixing the light on the verandah— thought you would like to help him Wray?

Wray. Sure thing Chrissie, glad Art. has come early! (Exit Wray.)

Chrissie. I am so glad Marion, you're mother has consented to stay over for to-night.

Marion. Yes, after meeting our executive at the school the other evening, she seemed anxious to stay, in fact, I think she is considering staying over for our concert next Thursday.

Chrissie. Oh, I hope she will!

Marion. I just feel Chrissie, that we are going to have a real good time to-night!

Enter Mrs. Kitto. L.D.

Chrissie. Ah, here is Auntie now! You look quite rested after your nap. Here are some snaps Marion (handing package off the piano) which we sent to be developed, perhaps Auntie would like to see them. I must go and attend to father—he never thinks he is dressed, if I don't button his collar, and fix his tie.

Exit Chrissie R.D.

Enter Neal and his father L.D.

Marion. Good evening, Mr. Sanderson, (Shakes hands). Meet my mother Mr. Sanderson.

Mr. Sanderson. Pleased to meet you Mrs. Kitto.

Mrs. Kitto. (Extending her hand) How-do-you-do Mr., pardon me—Marion, I did not catch the name.

Marion. Sanderson— mother.

Mrs. Kitto. How-do-you-do, Mr. San—— (Gazing at Mr. S. in a surprised way) — James!

Mr. Sanderson. (Returning the gaze) Cynthia! Can it be you?

Mrs. Kitto. Yes, it is I, (fanning herself) My, this is such a surprise!

Mr. Sanderson. (Offering his arm) Come out to the door Cynthia, you look faint.

Mrs. Kitto. Yes, such a surprise as this, has about taken my breath away!

(Exuent Mr. Sanderson and Mrs. Kitto L.D.)

Marion. (Smiling at Neal) A surprise to us too, eh, Neal?

Neal. Well I should say so! Oh! did Chrissie give you those snaps?

Marion. (Going to cosy corner) Yes, let us look at them.

Neal seats himself beside Marion, and they look at snaps, laughing and making remarks about them.
R.D. opens, enter Chrissie, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins.

Mrs. Simpkins. (Looking over at Marion and Neal) Humph! Cultervatin' your telents I 'spose!

Neal Yes, just what we are doing, Mrs. Simpkins (Offering her a chair) Do have a seat. And how are you to-night Mr. Simpkins? Here's a good easy chair, just sit down, and make yourselves comfortable.

Mrs. Simpkins. Oh, we just dropped in for a few minutes on our way from town, to see your Aunt Cynthia, Chrissie, heard she were here.

Chrissie. Yes, she is Mrs. Simpkins, I will call her.

(Exit Chrissie L D.)

Neal. (Talks to Mr. Simpkins about his new colt, Marion to Mrs. Simpkins about weather)

Enter Chrissie, followed by Mrs. Kitto.

Mrs. Simpkins. (Rising shakes hands with Mrs. Kitto). And how are ya keepin', Cynthia?

Mrs. Kitto. Just fine, Mrs. Simpkins.

Mrs. Simpkins. Mrs. Simpkins, indeed! It us'ta be Molly when we driv the cows to water, ya and me, Cynthia Maxwell! Allys forgit yar other name.

Mrs. Kitto. (Graciously). Yes, you are right, Molly. I am real glad to see you. And how are you? You are looking fairly well.

Mrs. Simpkins. (Taking off her hat). Ya can't al'ys go by look though! (Turning to Neal) Ya wouldn't think now, Cynthia an' me was the same age, would ya? Let me see, ya'r birthday is next March, isn't it, Cynthia?

Mrs. Kitto. Yes, it is.

Mrs. Simpkins. Yas, ya will be fifty years old next March. 'nd I'll be fifty in February. (To Neal). But "Fine feathers make fine birds!" It's surprisin', it is, how many of them 'ere city folks do make a livin' with ther pink cheeks an' soft white hands, 'nd

how they do keep ther hair from gettin' gray, do beats me! (Resumes seat.)

Neal. How did your wheat turn out this year, Mr. Simpkins?

Mr. Simpkins. Fair, very fair, Neal. Twenty-two bushels, weren't it, Maw?

Mrs. Simpkins. Yes, twenty-two bushels to the acre, 'nd we sowed seventy acres. We made a nice litte bit off our weat this yer. But it were lots of hard work, weren't it, Hiram?

Mr. Simpkins. Yer right, Molly, it were.

Chrissie. Give me your hat, and shawl, Mrs. Simpkins, and you and Mr. Simpkins stay for the evening. We are expecting some of the members of the Talent Club, and we will have a little programme. I am sure you would enjoy it. Won't you stay, Mr. Simpkins?

Mr. Simpkins. It's just as Maw says, Chrissie.

Mrs. Simpkins. (Rising). No, we can't stay. There's a long day of hard work ahead o' us t'morra! Let's be goin', Hiram.

Neal. Mrs. Simpkins, will you let Lem come over to our Talent Club meeting next Monday night? We would very much like to see him a member.

Mrs. Simpkins. No, he can't come. He's got 'nough to do all day, 'thout gaddin' round nights to any club meet-in's!

Neal. (Standing in front of Mrs. Simpkins). Mrs. Simpkins, I want to talk to you and Mr. Simpkins a few minutes. Be seated, please.

(Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins again take seats. Chrissie and Mrs. Kitto go to other side of room, and seat themselves near Marion, who shows them the snaps she has in her hand).

Neal. Mrs. Simpkins, you said a while ago that you were the same age as Mrs. Kitto. You look much older!

Mrs. Simpkins. (Offended). Wall, I guess if Cyntha Maxwell hed worked as hard as I hev all ma life, she wouldn't be lookin' so fresh 'nd pink like!

Neal. Yes, that may be true—but, undersand, Mrs. Simpkins, I am not making these remarks in an unkind spirit. It's Lemuel's welfare I am thinking of.

Mrs. Simpkins. Lem! What's he got to do with it?

Neal. Just this, Mrs. Simpkins. Some day you and Mr. Simpkins are going to break down entirely, working so hard, and Lem

will be left alone, with the farm on his hands. How is he going to manage it?

Mr. Simpkins. Just what I said many a time Neal—you know I'm ten years older than Maw, and believe me, I can't stand the work I us'ta. Seems somehow 'sif the work on our farm's harder 'nd the weeds grow faster like, then they do on this farm, and Brownlow's.

Mrs. Simpkins. Wall, the time were, when Maxwell's and Brownlow's farms weren't any better'n ours! It's you, Neal Sander son, 'nd your brother Arthur, with yer college eddication, that's made the diff'rence!

Neal. Lem will make the same difference in your farm, if you will only give him a chance. Now, see here, Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins, you have had, as you say, a fair crop this year. You can afford to send Lem this winter to the same Agricultural College that Arthur and I went to.

Mr. Simpkins. I'm willin'. What d'ye say, Molly?

Mrs. Simpkins. He's hed very little schoolin', 'nd ya know how he stutters like.

Neal. How old is he?

Mrs. Simpkins. He were twenty-five last July first.

Neal. I have seen boys come to the College older than him, and make good. He will be taught there to overcome that stammering in his speech. Why, my friends, they will make a scholar and a man out of him! Give the boy a chance! And believe me, if you do, in a few years your farm and garden will be just as good as either Mr. Maxwell's or Mr. Brownlow's.

Mrs. Simpkins. I guess we'd better, Hiram, or some day he'll be turnin' on us, like Maria Ann, 'nd sayin' we never give him a chance.

Mr. Simpkins. Thet's so, Maw, and Maria Ann 'nd the girls do seem to be comin' on so, since they j'ined the Talent Club.

Mrs. Simpkins. How d'ya think Maria Ann's gals did t'other night at the Church, Chrissie?

Chrissie. They just did fine, Mrs. Simpkins. They have such sweet voices, and they are coming along so well with their piano lessons, Mrs. Fields says.

Mrs. Simpkins. Wall, of course, Paw 'nd me are no jedges, but we did feel kind'a proud like to see Maria Ann's gals acomin' out, like other childern, and Maria Ann and Dick said all the credit were due to Mrs. Fields and yer cousin, they were atrain'in

them. Wall, we must be agoin'.

Chrissie. You don't think you could stay for the evening? We would really like to have you.

Mrs. Simpkins. No, Lem will be wonderin' what's keepin' us, 'nd I hev since enough to know, Chrissie, thet our clothes air jest too shabby lookin', when the rest of yer are all dressed up so spic and span.

Chrissie. Well, if you feel that way about it, Mrs. Simpkins

Mrs. Simpkins. Wall, now that Maria Ann an' the family are comin' out into s'ciety, 'nd Lem is goin' to that 'ere Colledge, I s'pose I'll hev to buy some decent clothes fer us all.

Mrs. Kitto. That's right, Molly, be good to yourself, and take things easier now. It's coming to you!

Mrs. Simpkins. I reckon it is. I'll see that Lem goes to your Club meetin' Monday night, Neal. Then you'd better come over 'nd tell us more about that 'ere Colledge.

Neal. I certainly will, Mrs. Simpkins, and I will be looking for Lem Monday night.

Mrs. Simpkins. Wall, good-night, all. Come over and see us, Cynthia, 'fore yer go.

Mrs. Kitto. Yes, Molly, I will be over. Good-night.

(Marion bids Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins good-night. Chrissie opens door).

Neal. I will close the gate for you, Mr. Simpkins.

(Exit Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins, Neal and Chrissie).

Mrs. Kitto. Marion, why did you never tell me about Neal's father?

Marion. Because you never asked me about him, Mother.

Mrs. Kitto. I guess I did not, but I was so surprised to find he is an old friend of mine.

Marion. Indeed! Where did you meet him?

Mrs. Kitto. When I was only twenty, before I married your father, I spent a summer at Aunt Lucy's, in Edinburgh, Scotland, and there I met Mr. Sanderson. He was a great favorite of Aunt Lucy's. He is one of the finest men I ever met. In fact, Marion, James Sanderson is not an ordinary man!

Marion. Well, if he is not an ordinary man, what kind of a

man is he, Mother?

Mrs. Kitto. Ah, I see you have got me this time; but Marion, I will, indeed, be proud to call Neal Sanderson my son.

Marion. Thank you, Mother.

Mrs. Kitto. And I am proud of you, too, Marion. The change in your appearance and manners is wonderful to me.

Enter Mr. Maxwell and Wray, L.D.

Wray (going to table). Have a game, Dad?

Mr. Maxwell. I will, son.

Enter Ann, R.D.

Wray. Have a game with Dad and I, Ann?

Ann. With pleasure, Wray (all three interested in game).

Enter Chrissie, Arthur, Neal and his father, R.D.

Chrissie. (Going to piano, and addressing Marion, Arthur and Neal). Will we practice our quartette for Thursday night? (All assent, go to piano, and sing a selected quartette. Marion plays accompaniment. Mr. Sanderson takes seat by Mrs Kitto. Just before the last two lines are sung, Ann leaves room. Voices are heard in the hall. When singing is finished, Ann enters room, followed by Mrs. Fawcett, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Fields. All have met Mr. Sanderson and Mrs. Kitto, and exchange greetings. Wray and Arthur arrange seats).

Chrissie. Will our President now take charge of our meeting?

Neal. (Who has been arranging papers on small table, uses it for desk). Ladies and gentlemen, our object in calling this special meeting of our executive this evening is two-fold, namely: to have an extra practice before our entertainment comes off next Thursday; also to spend a social evening with our visiting friends. I will now call on our most worthy Vice-President, Mrs. Fawcett, to briefly explain to our visiting friends the origin and aim of the Talent Club.

Mrs. Fawcett. The Talent Club was organized three years ago by six earnest young people. Our aim is to be interested in every member of our community, and to do our best to assist young and old, to cultivate their talents. There are two divisions to our Club. This is Division A, and we are endeavoring to assist along the lines of literature, music and oratory. Our Church and community depend on this division for assistance in giving concerts, lectures and presenting plays. Division B has for its mem-

bers those who wish to excel in cookery, needlework and horticulture. Fairs are gotten up by this division, when prizes are given, and here the young people are encouraged by their elders to do their best. This division assists at Church socials, community banquets, etc. The members of these two divisions range in age from seven to eighty years.

Neal. I might just state here that a specialist in our horticulture class is eighty years of age; another member of that age plays in our Club Band. We will now be favored with a vocal duet by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Fields.

(Mr. and Mrs. Fields sing humorous song—selection optional.)

Neal. Mr. Maxwell will now favor us with a violin solo. (Mr Maxwell plays solo—optional).

Neal. Master Wray Maxwell appears next on our programme. He will recite for us. (Wray recites—optional).

Neal. I believe our Secretary is preparing a speech for our entertainment next Thursday evening, ent'tled "Rural Problems." Will he favor us with it tonight?

Arthur. Mr. President and visiting friends, I am not going to bore you with the speech I have prepared for next Thursday night. Our rural problems are many. I will just state here tonight that for our own community at least we, the members of the Talent Club, are solving the much talked of problem, "how to keep our young people on the farm."

Neal. We will now be favored with a vocal solo by Miss Ann Perkins, entitled:

(Ann sings popular Scotch song. Encore).

Neal. I see our quartette is down for a selection. Two verses of this we gave a while ago, so we will just sing the remaining two. (Chrissie, Marion, Neal and Arthur sing).

Neal. As this finishes our programme, possibly our visiting friends would like to make some remarks. Mrs. Kitto, we would like to hear from you.

Mrs. Kitto. Somehow, I cannot realize I am back home on the old farm. There are such great changes—in the home, on the farm, and its people. If conditions had been the same when I was on the farm, I would have liked it. As it was, I never cared for the life.

Mr. Maxwell. Cynthia, when you were on the farm, you could not lead a horse to water, let alone a number of people!

Mrs. Kitto. You are right, Roger, and if I remember rightly, all that you could play on your violin were jigs for the dances! How is it you can play so well now?

Mr. Maxwell—That is Chrissie's doing. She insisted I had talent in that line, and sent a teacher from town here. I took twenty lessons from him last winter.

Mrs. Kitto. Chrissie, you are simply wonderful!

Chrissie. Nothing wonderful about it, Aunt Cynthia—only common-sense. Why should Father or Ann, simply because they are getting up in years, take a back seat? Why, Ann charms many an audience with her beautiful voice, and Father's playing is always well received. It's an inspiration to us younger folks, to have the older members of the Club mingling with us, and taking part in our programmes.

Mr. Maxwell. And believe me, we enjoy it! Do we not, Ann?

Ann. Yes, speaking for myself, I consider it a pleasure, as well as my duty, to keep on improving my talents. I notice in the Good Book, when the Master gave the talents to His servants, it says: "He went away for a long time; then he came back, and reckoned with them." So I take it from that there is no age limit, that as long as we have strength and ability, we are just to keep a-going on, and improving ourselves, and keep our talents bright and shining till the Master comes—or else we will be like the unprofitable servant, who buried his one talent.

Neal. Like precious pearls to us younger ones, are the words of wisdom and high ideals of our older members. As all of the members of our Club have contributed to our entertainment this evening, we would like to have our visiting members display their ability along these lines. Mrs. Kitto, you sing or play, do you not?

Mr. Maxwell. Yes, Cynthia, you used to sing in the olden days. Let us have one of your old songs tonight.

Mrs. Kitto. Yes, I did have a very good voice for singing in my youth—(sadly)—but, like the unprofitable servant, in my pursuit after pleasure and ease, I have neglected my talent, and it has become rusted and cracked. But I would like to express my appreciation of this Talent Club. In the few days that I have been here, and have seen for myself the results of your efforts in this home, and community, also, the wonderful change in my own daughter—it is marvelous to me. I must confess I do not understand it. It is beyond my comprehension!

Roy Fields. I feel we are highly honored tonight, in having as our guest, our worthy President's father. Knowing that he is

a man of keen perception and broad experience, I am sure we would all be pleased to have him address us.

Neal. (To father). We are waiting, Father.

Mr. Sanderson. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. During the last ten years I have visited many towns and rural districts, not only in the Old Land, but also in Canada, and the United States. I must truthfully state that nowhere have I found such a happy, prosperous people as you have here in Beaconsfield. I attribute this to the fact, that in your midst, especially amongst your young people, you have leaders—leaders who have the moral courage to tackle the problems which are facing you at your own doors. To improve your own talents, and to be interested in others, especially those who are not so fortunate as yourself, to strive to help them to better living, to higher ideals, this is God-like. Young people, believe me, you are on the **right track**.

(Applause by all on the platform).

(Wray leaves room and returns with a long box).

Mrs. Roy Fields. Mr. President and dear friends, I would like right here to state that it is with much regret that we, the members of Division A, have heard, Miss Kitto, that you are about to leave our midst. We will miss your cheerful, willing help, particularly in the musical training of the children. Your assistance at our recent concert was very much appreciated. We hope that some day you will return to us, and continue your work amongst us again.

(All on Platform. Applause.)

Mrs. Fields. Our Division thought of flowers as a slight token of our appreciation. I will now ask Mrs. Fawcett to present same

(Wray removes flowers from box and hands to Mrs. Fawcett, placing box under table; then takes a seat on left side of Neal's table.)

(Marion comes forward, and stands by right side of Neal's table; Mrs. Fawcett to the left of Marion).

Mrs. Fawcett. Allow me, Miss Kitto, on behalf of Division A of the Talent Club, to present you with these flowers.

Marion. (Accepts and admires the proffered flowers). Thank you. My dear friends, how **can** I thank you all for this beautiful token of your friendship, and your very kind words? This is a new experience for me. (Lays flowers on table and speaks very earnestly). Oh, my friends, believe me, I have received much more help than I have given! When I

look back to the first days of my visit here—to my cramped and narrow conception of life, and the possibilities I now see ahead of me, I feel I have great cause for gratitude. This living with nature the last five months has had a wonderful effect on me; but it's you people—my dear friends here in this home, and in the Talent Club, who have done so much for me. Today I realize I am not my own—that some day I must give an account to the Giver of all good, for the talents which He has given me Yes, I am going away, for a year—possibly two—to a school where I can more fully study rural life. Then, I am happy to say, I hope to come back to live and work more efficiently amongst you.

(As Marion finishes speaking Wray slyly lifts bouquet, which Marion has laid on table when speaking, and hands to Neal, who has been watching and listening intently to Marion. Neal absently takes flowers, admires them, looking again at Marion, who is smilingly looking up at him. Neal recovers himself, and with a smile presents flowers again to Marion).

THE END.

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